

Senator Tom Harkin: Commitment to Higher Education in the Cedar Valley

As a first generation graduate of Iowa State University who attended college thanks to a Navy ROTC scholarship, Senator Harkin knows the value of a college degree. That's why he has spent his career fighting to ensure that all Iowans have access to high quality affordable higher education in Iowa. Through his leadership on the Senate Committees that oversee and fund higher education initiatives, Harkin has fought for programs and successfully steered funds to the University of Northern Iowa in order to support the students, programs, and activities at the University.



February, 2011: Senator Harkin convenes a field hearing titled, "Preserving America's Economic Security," at UNI to discuss funding for critical education, health, labor, and other initiatives.

UNI's greatest commitment is to its students, which is why Senator Harkin has fought to bring the cost of college within reach for all Iowans. The many actions he has taken to help expand access to higher education include:

- Leading the effort to modernize the student loan process so that all loans are originated by the Direct Loan program instead of private lenders, making student access to affordable college loans more universal.
- Increasing access to and maximum award amount of Pell Grants, the cornerstone of the federal financial aid programs and the gateway for low-income students to attend college. In the 2011-2012 school year alone, more than 3,000 students at the University of Northern Iowa received Pell Grants, lowering their loan burden by more than \$11.4 million.

Today, a college degree is more valuable than ever to a young Iowan's future economic opportunities. But the economic activity created by the University of Northern Iowa exceeds the value of the degrees they bestow on young Iowans. The University is also a hub of economic development in Black Hawk County, which is why Senator Harkin has provided direct funding to and supported programs that benefit the University. Since 1991, Harkin has helped to secure over \$95 million in federal funds for projects at UNI, and his support for programs like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Agricultural Research Service have generated billions of dollars in research across the Iowa Regents schools.

In particular, Harkin has provided support to a number of successful programs at the University of Northern Iowa:

- Beginning in 1998, working with members of the Iowa delegation, Harkin helped to secure over \$9.6 million for the Ag-based Industrial Lubricant Testing Center, which was a nationally recognized leader in the development of biobased lubricants.
- UNI has had success in helping companies use resources more effectively, which is why Harkin has supported over \$22 million in funds for programs that help employers reduce waste and prevent pollution.
- Building on UNI's strength as a leader in teacher training and preparation, Harkin has helped to provide over \$11 million in funds for programs at UNI to pursue programs that help train math teachers and expand access to higher education in rural communities.
- Starting in 1991, Harkin has provided more than \$3 million to support the Metal Casting Center at UNI.
- With his Senate colleagues, Harkin supported over \$12 million for construction of a multimodal transportation facility at the University.

To stay up-to-date on these and other issues, please visit <http://www.harkin.senate.gov/>, Senator Harkin's Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/tomharkin> or follow him on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/SenatorHarkin>.